

Question: **What is alcoholism?**
Answer: Alcoholism is a disease. People who have the disease have lost control over their drinking. Once a person loses control over drinking, he or she needs help to stop.

Question: **How does alcoholism start?**
Answer: Doctors don't know why people become alcoholics. Some start out drinking a little bit and end up hooked on alcohol. A person may drink to forget problems or to calm nerves and then end up needing alcohol to feel normal.

Question: **Why can't an alcoholic just stop drinking?**
Answer: One of the symptoms of alcoholism is that the person has lost control over drinking and that makes it very hard for the alcoholic to stop drinking.

Question: **If the alcoholic is sick, why doesn't he or she go to a doctor?**
Answer: At first the alcoholic is not aware that he or she is ill. Even when the alcoholic becomes aware that all is not well, he or she may be the last one to believe that alcohol is the problem.

Question: **Is there an "average" alcoholic?**
Answer: No. There is no such person as the average alcoholic. Alcoholics can be young, old, rich, poor, male or female.

Question: **What is the cure for alcoholism?**
Answer: There is no cure for alcoholism except halting the disease process by quitting drinking.

Question: **Can family members make an alcoholic stop drinking?**
Answer: No. It is important to know that an alcoholic needs help

to stop drinking, but no one can be forced to accept help. It is also important to know that family members alone cannot provide the help that the alcoholic needs. An alcoholic needs the help of people trained to treat the disease.

Question: **How many people in the United States have at least one alcoholic parent?**

Answer: About 7 million children are growing up with at least one alcoholic parent; nearly 21 million adults grew up in homes with an alcoholic parent.

Question: **If I can't make my alcoholic parent stop drinking, what can I do to make myself feel better?**

Answer: Talk to someone you trust about the problem, like a teacher, Scout leader, or sports coach. Also, there is a group for kids who have alcoholic parents called "Alateen." Alateen has meetings like a club, and the kids share tips on how to make life easier.

Question: **How can I find Alateen?**

Answer: Look for the phone number of Alateen in the phone book, or call directory assistance (411) for the number of Alateen. If you have one parent who does not drink a lot, or a relative or a family friend, maybe he or she will take you to an Alateen meeting.

The author of this publication is unknown.

Questions and Answers About Alcohol Problems for Teenagers



*Publication No. (ADP) #95-8540
Reprinted May 2000*

Resource Center
State of California
Alcohol & Drug Programs
1700 K Street
First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

(800) 879-2772 (CA only)
(916) 327-3728
Fax: (916) 323-1270
TTY: (916) 445-1942
Internet: www.adp.ca.gov
E-mail: ResourceCenter@adp.state.ca.us